Department of Agriculture and Fisheries

Annual Accountability Report For The Fiscal Year 2000-2001

(Including Former Departments of Agriculture & Marketing and Fisheries & Aquaculture)

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Message From The Minister

I am pleased to provide the 2000-2001 Annual Accountability Report for the Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture and Fisheries. This report reflects the many achievements outlined in the 2000-2001 Business Plans for the former Department of Agriculture and Marketing and the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture. I invite readers to visit the department's website, http://www.gov.ns.ca and the Nova Scotia Agricultural College website, http://www.nsac.ns.ca/ for detailed information on the department and the College.

Accountability Statement

This Department of Agriculture and Fisheries accountability report is for the year ending March 31, 2001. Pursuant to the *Financial Measures Act* (2000) reporting of outcomes for each department or agency's business plan is required. The reporting of department outcomes includes estimates, judgments and opinions by department management.

We acknowledge that this accountability report is the responsibility of department management. The report represents, to the extent possible, a complete and accurate representation of outcomes relative to the goals and priorities set out in the department business plan for the year.

Minister Ernest L. Fage

Deputy Minister, Peter Underwood

Agency Head

Impact of Government Restructuring

The former departments of Agriculture and Marketing, and Fisheries and Aquaculture amalgamated in October 2000 to create the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries. This merger fulfilled a Government commitment to reorganize its public service to minimize duplication and concentrate on delivering client services more strategically and effectively. The department now services a direct client base of some 28,000 Nova Scotians and an industry that contributes about $2 billion to the provincial economy. Agriculture, fishing and aquaculture together drive the economies of Nova Scotia's rural and coastal communities.

The merged department consists of four service areas, an integrated, centralized policy, planning and communications division, and the Nova Scotia Agricultural College. (See Appendix 1 Organizational Chart)

Agriculture Services provides regional agricultural services, dykeland maintenance, resource stewardship activities, 4-H program for rural youth, agricultural development and risk management programs, and oversees legislated organizations responsible for the orderly marketing of supply managed commodities.

Fisheries and Aquaculture Services provides advisory services for the commercial fishery, field services, coastal zone management, new fish technology, aquaculture development, and management of the inland fisheries resource.

Legislation and Compliance Services combines the legislative and regulatory capabilities of the two former departments including licensing, legislation, investigations and laboratory services.

Industry Development and Business Services integrates marketing, product quality development, business management and economic development services, and two business development agencies: the Farm Loan Board and the Fisheries and Aquaculture Loan Board.

Policy, Planning and Communications provides centralized coordination and support to departmental policy, planning and communications activities in fulfillment of the department's mission and broad government priorities.

Nova Scotia Agricultural College takes a leading role in providing education, research and public service in the agricultural and food industries and related disciplines. The College is dedicated to helping people acquire the skills, wisdom and independence needed for a lifetime of learning and contribution to the well-being of Atlantic Canada and other regions, both nationally and internationally.

Achievements Strategic Goals and Priorities

Goal: Protect NS interests in fishery management policies to ensure fair economic opportunities in our rural regions.

- Tackle the growing problem of illegal fishing, buying and selling by strengthening fisheries enforcement efforts.

New investment of $125,000 for enforcement efforts was put in place in 2000-2001. New regulations regarding fish buying, selling and holding were put in place to support the enhanced enforcement capacity. The department continued to participate on the federal/provincial Enforcement Task Force to address illegal fishing.

- Ensure that the Federal Government clearly defines who is eligible to participate in the Native Food Fishery.

The department continued to participate on a multi-party working group to determine eligibility in the Native Food Fishery. Participants also included federal government, Mi'kmaq leaders, fishing industry organizations, and other provincial government departments.

- Aggressively represent Nova Scotian fishing interests to Ottawa.

The Minister signed a new agreement with the Government of Canada and all provinces on inter-jurisdictional cooperation. Nova Scotia took a lead role in the development and implementation of the Inter-jurisdictional Cooperation Agreement between federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) and provincial Fisheries and Aquaculture Departments.

- Ensure that the Minister's Council meets twice a year with industry groups to address major issues, including offshore oil and gas development.

The department established a special forum of industry and departmental representatives, co-chaired by the Minister and Deputy Minister to discuss issues of common concern to the fishing industry overall and seek effective means of moving them toward resolution. The Minister's Fisheries Council meets twice a year.

Goal: Foster a climate for economic growth and job creation in rural communities by promoting and supporting opportunities for diversification.

- Support policies which recognize that the traditional strength of the fishery in Nova Scotia has been diversification of plants, vessels and gear.

The department continued to work with industry on developing new opportunities in commercial harvesting, fish processing, aquaculture and boat building. Fisheries and Aquaculture Loan Board provided financial assistance to harvesters and aquaculturists.

The department continued to work with industry through the Technology Development Program which sponsored 14 projects valued at $140,000. New species and value-added seafood and fisheries products were developed.

The Fishing Industry Self Help Program (FISH) supported fishers, processors and aquaculturists investigating new and leading edge production/ manufacturing processes and techniques in Canada and internationally.

- Support innovation and self-reliance in rural communities by assisting efforts to develop new fish harvesting and export opportunities.

The department's marketing efforts included trade counseling, communication of market information, facilitation of formal business sessions, trade delegations tours, website and data base development. Planning and development of provincial fish and seafood promotional material and trade shows focused on US and EU markets.

- Maintain stability in the industry and foster a competitive business climate by providing financial support through the Fisheries and Aquaculture Loan Board.

The Fisheries and Aquaculture Loan Board portfolio was fully utilized with gross loans of $ 24 million. The Loan Board participated in government and department financial management and accountability initiatives. As well it implemented the Aquaculture Working Capitol Loan Guarantee Program and the Groundfish Loan Deferment Program to assist groundfish harvesters, impacted by the downturn in this sector.

- Establish a mechanism to allow licenses, ITQs and EAs to be considered as valued assets for the purpose of determining loan arrangements through the Fisheries and Aquaculture Loan Board.

Preliminary discussions on a process and policy have occurred with DFO. Industry has provided input and has been kept up to date through the bi-annual provincial Minister's Fisheries Conference. Efforts to initiate a change in policy will be ongoing.

- Pursue a new federal/provincial development agreement focused on marketing, value-added and diversification.

Due to the time and efforts associated with amalgamation and the integration of marketing for both the agriculture and fisheries industries, this priority will be pursued through a more comprehensive strategy in 2001-2002.

Goal: Create a strategic environment for a sustainable and expanding aquaculture industry.

- Provide suitable aquatic lease space for increased aquaculture activity and onsite fish health, technical, and farm management support.

The department continued to work with industry and other government agencies in strategic development of this expanding industry. Commercial operations increased by one percent or five sites over the one year period.

- Provide on-site fish health, technical and farm management support.

The department continued to work with multiple agencies to provide on-site service to the aquaculture industry.

- Promote best husbandry practices and new farm species to improve the industry's ability to compete effectively.

The value of aquaculture landings and employment in the industry continued to grow. Production values were $50.5 million in 2000. As well, 1058 Nova Scotians were employed full and part-time on 381 commercial operations.

- Recruit experienced, low-risk aquaculture investment in the province.

The department continued to work with industry and other levels of government in the development of the aquaculture industry within the province.

Goal: Work with Nova Scotia seafood producers to promote their products worldwide, develop new products and penetrate new markets.

- Increase sales of Nova Scotia's seafood products, including aquaculture products, in the food service industry through targeted marketing and promotions.

Seafood is Nova Scotia's leading export. The department continued to work with industry clients, government agencies and research establishments to maintain strong market demand for NS seafood. Efforts have been ongoing to promote Nova Scotia seafood domestically. The department participated in regional, national, and international food shows - the primary vehicle for promoting Nova Scotia seafood products to the food service sector and consumers at large.

- Promote research and development of new seafood products, especially "value added" products.

A plan has been developed to promote value-added products. This plan will be distributed to the seafood sector for feedback.

- Place real emphasis on marketing Nova Scotian seafood products as an integral part of our "Buy Nova Scotia First" program.

Seafood is an integral component of the "Brand Nova Scotia" initiative. Activities included partnering with Taste of Nova Scotia Society to promote an identity for Nova Scotia seafood, and recruiting additional companies for the Taste of Nova Scotia Quality Food Council.

- Assist fish processors in meeting compliance requirements of the Canadian Food and Inspection Agency and other health and safety matters.

The department worked collaboratively with the industry to meet the requirements and assure compliance for food safety matters.

Goal: Ensure that programs and services to the fishing and aquaculture sectors offer best value for money, and are accountable for results achieved.

- Continue to participate in annual business and budget planning process to ensure that the department delivers its programs and services within budget targets and reports on performance.

This continued to occur with more emphasis on accountability through outcome measures and evaluation of programs and services.

- Continue to provide direct, single-window service delivery to our clients through offices based in rural centers.

The regional offices have been maintained and continued direct service delivery.

- Improve public and client access to information and departmental services through an enhanced Website.

A new enhanced website for the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries has been launched.

Goal: Conserve and enhance inland fish stocks and increase economic returns for businesses servicing a sportfishing clientele.

- Manage the inland resource through successful partnerships with stakeholder groups.

The department continued to partner with angling groups to produce at least 1 new "river map" per annum, outlining local angling opportunities. Over 700 volunteers participated in enhancement activities during the year. Highlands "Speckled Trout Management Area'" was promoted through both a brochure and volunteer activities.

The department collaborated on temperature monitoring research with Acadia University involving 22 non-government organizations. It also collaborated with Natural Resources to deliver the Becoming an Outdoors Woman (BOW) to 102 women during the past year.

- Promote sportfishing in Nova Scotia through stocking programs, sportfishing events, and new angling opportunities.

License sales continued to increase by 4% per annum, adding $15 million in expenditures for the sector. On average, six new angling opportunities are added to the resource annually. A suite of Special Management Areas were added in each of the six Regional Fishing Areas (RFA's) to provide opportunity within a distinct fisheries management framework.

- Raise public awareness and promote conservation through the Adopt-A-Stream and other educational programs.

The department continued to network with some 60 non-governmental agencies and various government agencies on a variety of initiatives aimed at enhancing aquatic science, management, conservation, enhancement and enforcement of inland fish stocks.
This included 31 community groups involved in Adopt-a-Stream. The Sportfishing Weekend Program involved 16 groups. In 2001, the first national Sportfishing Week was held with 10 events in Nova Scotia.

Goal: Support life-long learning in NS's coastal and rural communities by providing training in fisheries and aquaculture, and consulting services.

The School of Fisheries and Aquaculture was transferred to the Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC) for delivery of training programs. The department will continue to work closely with the industry and the NSCC system.

The NS Agriculture College continues to provide aquaculture training through its aquaculture degree program.

Goal: Encourage the competitiveness of the agriculture and food industry so new employment and income opportunities can be created.

The department works with the Agricultural Development Institute (ADI) to identify and capture opportunities for the agriculture industry in NS. ADI is industry-led and provides innovative development services including information and knowledge transfer, research facilitation, innovation, development and value-added.

- Develop and implement a package of long-term, flexible programs for the agricultural industry to support economic sustainability and promote growth.

Development Programs:

Two programs were introduced as successors to the five-year Agri-Focus 2000 program. The Agri-Food Industry Development Fund provided $460,000 in support of 56 projects aimed at business and market development, innovative entrepreneurism and increasing public awareness of the value of Nova Scotia's agri-industry. The Farm Resource Management and Innovation Fund provided $3.0 million to 1660 farm projects focused on responsible resource management, business development, and research. The farming community participated heavily in projects aimed at soil and water management and farm and public protection.

The Canada/NS Technology Development 2000 program continued to provide funding to research projects in support of developing leading agricultural technologies. Total funding of $1.59 million was provided in support of 129 projects.

Apple and Grain/Forage Industry Development - These companion programs provided a total of $1.035 million to industry in the 1997-2001 period. Funds are delivered through research projects and are administered by the respective industry groups.

Beef Performance - For the fifth year, a Net Income Stabilization Account (NISA) for the beef sector was offered. The program paid $495,000 to 446 applicants in 2000-2001.

Risk Management/Safety Nets:

A comprehensive Risk Management Policy forms the basis for industry consultation and program design. The department worked with the federal government and industry to develop the 2001-2003 safety nets package. Risk Management information meetings were held across the province in cooperation with the Crop and Livestock Insurance Commission.

Net Income Stabilization Account - NISA balances increased by 22% to $21.3 million during the 1999 stabilization year (2000 calendar year) and 1146 NS producers participated.

AIDA/CFIP - The Agricultural Income Disaster Assistance (AIDA) program provided protection against extreme income reductions for the 1998 and 1999 tax years. AIDA has been replaced in the 2000-2002 tax years by the Canadian Farm Income Program (CFIP).

Farm Registration

The department continued to administer the *Farm Registration Act* with 2,398 farms registered in 2000-2001. This was the highest registration in the six year history of the program.

- Insist that the federal government provide drought assistance to Nova Scotian farmers, according to their needs.

The department continued to work with the federal government in development of federal/provincial programming for the agriculture industry. For the second year, an accelerated $20 million relief program was made available to farmers who suffered financial loss due to drought in 1997 and 1998. The program was accelerated to provide funding over three years versus five years.

- Develop a water infrastructure strategy to help farmers pro-actively deal with future drought conditions and water shortages, support long-term planning, and lessen weather-related impacts on farm income.

Department staff assisted the Kings County Growers Water Group of Horticulture Nova Scotia in its study of water resources and quality. A "Farm Water Forever Seminar" was organized with great success. Both NS Department of Agriculture & Fisheries and NS Department of Environment and Labour staff participated. Waste water treatment and water management were priority research initiatives in 2000-2001.

- Develop a consumer awareness program for local products through the province's quality-based Taste of Nova Scotia Program, ensuring that it is consistent with the provincial Buy Nova Scotia First initiative.

The department launched the Agriculture Water Resource Development Program (AWARD) in 2000, making a total of $500,000 available over 2 years for projects in agricultural water management. To date, $356,000 has been committed to 13 projects.

The Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, together with the private sector and the Departments of Tourism and Economic Development, have been involved with a ten year old local quality identification program , "Taste of Nova Scotia" food service program and the "Taste of Nova Scotia Quality Food" program.

The Department of Agriculture and Fisheries is represented on a "Brand Nova Scotia" team of cross-government marketing and industry/business development representatives established by the Deputies Reference Group on Economic Development. Three principle areas are being explored: 1) develop a marketing initiative to highlight Nova Scotia product, service and technology availability and desirability (based on quality, price and delivery); 2) explore the potential for a Nova Scotia brand and targeted to consumers at home and abroad; 3) further develop and enhance marketing and communication synergies that collectively "sell" our products and our province.

- Maintain the Nova Scotia Farm Loan Board as a separate entity to address the unique needs of Nova Scotian farmers, providing them with access to capital, particularly for new ventures, and stimulating growth and job creation in the rural economy.

The Farm Loan Board continued to operate as a separate entity. The Farm Loan Board extended loans to agriculture to support capital projects and focused on strategic investment in the industry.

- Identify and develop marketing opportunities for Nova Scotian food products, services, and technologies in domestic and priority international areas with specific emphasis on horticulture, organics, and value-added and direct market products.

The department developed and implemented market research and feasibility study initiatives designed to investigate and communicate marketing and product opportunities in the organic, horticulture, direct marketing, hay and commercial test kitchen areas.

In 2000-2001, the department published the 1999-2000 Consumer Benchmark study, the Food Distribution and Wholesaling Profile report and the 1999-2000 Agri-Food Exports Directory as part of its efforts to measure progress in key outcome areas.

The department initiated a number of agricultural tourism projects including product and market inventories, training and networking, and direct marketing organizational development.

- Initiate a marketing enhancement program for Nova Scotian agriculture and food industry groups, designed to strengthen and coordinate their marketing capacity and to support Nova Scotian products in local and international markets.

The department was instrumental in the development of four key industry organizations/businesses designed to enhance critical mass and export competencies, address marketing opportunities, and increase sales of NS products at home and abroad- Taste of Nova Scotia, Atlantic Canada Export Club, Atlantic Canada Organic Regional Network, Caribbean Export Consortium.

In 2000-2001 the Agri-Food Industry Development Fund supported over 35 industry representatives and groups with business development, marketing, and product development projects designed to increase the value of NS agri- food products and industry growth and development.

The department implemented a comprehensive market development plan which highlighted trade, marketing and other business development initiatives. Highlights included development of a web-based marketing management prototype, export skill set inventory, marketing client data base project, and other trade, business development and communications initiatives with both government and industry partners.

- Establish a New Entrants Program to continue the tradition of family farming in Nova Scotia and promote the continued growth of the rural economy by encouraging new farmers and new ideas.

This program was introduced in 2000-2001 with a budget of $600,000. The program has been received positively by the farming industry and commodity groups including the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture. The program has resulted in new farmers entering the industry, as well as inter-generational transfer of farm operations to new owners / operators. To date, 52 new entrants have applied to the Farm Loan Board. The profile of commodities affected is non-sector specific and in total 15 different agricultural commodities have experienced new entrants to their sectors.

- Facilitate a series of policy forums to stimulate debate and create understanding of agricultural issues.

An Outlook Conference held in March 2001 identified priorities for industry and department. These included: food safety, public's perception of agricultural practices, public education, environmental stewardship, public policy, world trade and market development, ability to adopt new technology, demographic changes in society, animal welfare, and transgenic crops. The objective is to develop a new Agri-food Strategy for NS.

Goal: Provide leadership in the development of human resources for the agriculture and food industry and for rural communities.

- Provide specialized skills training and educational opportunities for youth in rural communities through the provincial 4-H program.

The department held the first Provincial Intermediate Conference, a joint production of Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture & Marketing and the Nova Scotia 4-H Council. Camp Rankin continued its 4-H camping program where 240 4-H members had a rewarding camping experience. International experience continued with the Czech - Nova Scotia 4-H Literacy Competition.

Agricultural Awareness activities in 2000-2001 included: March Break at the Museum, a nine day program designed to be a hands-on educational program targeting urban families. Over15,000 people visited the exhibit in 2000. More than 50,000 visitors visited the Ag Cot Discovery Center to gain a first hand look at agriculture in Nova Scotia.

- Working with the Department of Education, expand the current pilot project for agriculture-based high school curriculum to include schools province-wide.

The department continued to work with the Department of Education to develop a Grade 11 Agri-Science Curriculum, a new science course about Canadian and Nova Scotia Agriculture. The course is expected to be introduced in 2001-2002 school year.

Goal: Foster an environmentally responsible and sustainable agriculture and food industry.

- Implement a *Farm Practices Act* that balances the needs of farmers and their non-farming neighbours and encourages sustainable resource management and future growth.

The *Farm Practices Act* was proclaimed March 1, 2001. The Act protects farmers who follow accepted farm practices, (codes of practices, guidelines or accepted industry customs or standards). It allows a Farm Practices Board to hear appeals and will establish criteria outlining normal farm practices. Regulations under the Act are being developed.

- Maintain livestock health services assistance for farm animals and reinstate the veterinary fee subsidy for large farm animals to ensure the viability of veterinary farm services and a healthy farm industry across the province.

The *Livestock Health Service Act* provides for assistance to farms for veterinarian visitation to large farm animals. Bill No. 32, *Livestock Health Service Act* received first reading April 17, 2001 and is expected to be enacted in 2001-2002.

- In consultation with rural communities, develop an agricultural land policy to protect and sustain the province's valuable natural resources.

The department completed work on the *Farm Practices Act* which replaced the Agricultural Operations Protection Act. *The Farm Practices Act* came into effect in the fall of 2000, to provide an alternative to legal lawsuits for persons claiming nuisance/negligence as a result of a farming practice.

The *Agricultural Marshland Conservation Act* was proclaimed November 30, 2000. The *Act* protects much of the valuable marshland from non agricultural development, as well as controlling unsuitable development on flood prone plains. The province has more than 46,000 acres of dykeland under its protection.

- Assist farmers in the continued adoption of sustainable farming practices through the Nova Scotia Environmental Farm Plan program and sustainable farming technology.

Nineteen environmental farm plans were completed in cooperation with the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture. Seminars were offered on environmental farm plans to three farmer groups. Nutrient management for farms is recognized as a major issue and more effort was directed at awareness and education, including a nutrient management workshop. Regional extension work activities of the department also advised local governments in resource management and planning activities.

- Amend and consolidate existing food safety and meat inspection regulations to provide a single common public health protection standard across the province, enhancing food safety and contributing to a healthier Nova Scotia.

Due to the department's amalgamation and the efforts this required, the integration of food safety for both the agriculture and fisheries industries will be more aggressively pursued in a comprehensive strategy in 2001-2002.

- Develop a provincial program for disease surveillance to protect the industry and support market development.

Due to the efforts of department amalgamation and the integration of food safety for both the agriculture and fisheries industries, this priority will be pursued through a more comprehensive strategy in 2001-2002.

- Complete the implementation of a Laboratory Information Management System to improve laboratory service to industry and the public.

The Laboratory Information Management System was implemented in 2000-2001. The System will continue to be enhanced in its capacity to provide laboratory services.

Nova Scotia Agricultural College(NSAC)

NSAC has been highly successful in securing $3 million worth of research infrastructure through the Canada Foundation for Innovation and Economic Cooperation. NSAC has attracted industry support for eight jointly funded research professorships and has been awarded four Canada Research Chairs. These are significant measures of success for NSAC research program. (See http://www.nsac.ns.ca for more information)

The following goals and priorities flow from the 2000-2001 Business Plan of the Department of Agriculture and Marketing. The NSAC is therefore reported upon in this stand alone section, reflecting both the integration and uniqueness of the college within the department.

Goal: Provide leadership in the development of human resources for the agriculture and food industry and for rural communities.

- Establish new educational programs at the Nova Scotia Agricultural College in line with current issues facing rural Nova Scotians, including food quality assurance, organic agriculture, and rural resource management.

NSAC has incorporated materials related to sustainable resource management into academic programs at the technical, undergraduate and graduate levels.

Employment opportunities for NSAC graduates continued to increase. In the past year, the NSAC Career Services office posted 622 career opportunities for its 204 graduates.

- Increase international enrolment at the NSAC by recruiting in New England and Iceland and by participating in international development and student exchange projects.

The College continued to work closely with agricultural universities in central Europe, Scandinavian countries, Mexico, and the New England States in faculty exchange, recruitment of students, and collaboration on teaching and research projects.

- Increase the number of highly trained and qualified agricultural and aquacultural personnel by increasing enrolment in the joint NSAC/Dalhousie MSc program.

NSAC conducts research on sustainable agricultural resource management and has received funding to do research in aquacultural resource management. During the year, 287 research projects, valued at over $2.3 million dollars, were being carried out by 32 faculty members.

- Seek increased and stable support from the other Atlantic provinces for NSAC's agricultural technical programs.

NSAC has developed several new partnerships with universities and colleges in Nova Scotia, Atlantic Canada and beyond. NSAC continues to provide quality technical, undergraduate and graduate programs related to agriculture and the food industry.

- Employ new educational technology to deliver NSAC programs throughout Nova Scotia and beyond.

NSAC has provided opportunities for industry to learn about research related to sustainable resource management. NSAC faculty have made presentations of their work to industry at industry workshops and meetings.

NSAC has improved the accessibility of its programs to non-traditional students by offering some courses over the internet, or in one or two-week blocks instead of over a 14 week semester.

NSAC is developing a certificate program in organic agriculture which will be available over the Internet to persons in the workforce. Other certificate programs are being planned.

NSAC is currently developing at least 6 courses for delivery by educational technologies to reach off-campus students.

NSAC is involved in the preparation of at least ten proposals to the Atlantic Innovation Fund (AIF) which funds innovative research in partnership with industry. The goal of the AIF is to create new products and economic opportunities for Nova Scotia and the Atlantic Region .

NSAC continued to educate and train personnel for the development and growth of industry, and scientists for continued innovative development.

Goal: Encourage the competitiveness of the agriculture and food industry so new employment and income opportunities can be created.

- Increase federal and private-sector funding of international projects in order to provide programs with a global orientation for the benefit of NSAC's students and graduates and the industries they serve.

NSAC is committed to global food security and has been involved in international activities for over 15 years. The NSAC International Centre facilitates and co-ordinates international projects and consultancies. Ongoing projects include: Development of a University for the Gambia; Columbia - Development of a Training Program in Sustainable Agriculture at UFPS; China/Vietnam - Community Based Conservation Management; Ghana - Agri-Entrepreneurship Training; Bangladesh - Farm to Market Enterprise Development; Estonia - Developing Capacity for the Estonia Wild Berry Industry; Jamica - Agri-Education.

Human Resources Corporate Service Unit (HR-CSU)

- Provide corporate consultative advice and assistance to the department with regard to its strategic initiatives, restructuring efforts, organizational design and labour relations issues.

Human Resources (HR) provided extensive consultation and assistance with regard to these services in relation to the restructuring initiative and strategic planning.

- Provide guidance and support to departmental managers in Human Resource Planning, enhancing the department's ability to meet goals and future challenges.

HR staff provided consultation and assistance services in relation to the restructuring initiative and strategic planning.

- Continue to support the Corporate Integrated Management Development initiative by coordinating the Succession Planning and Performance Management processes within the department. This includes providing ongoing consultative support to managers as well as analytical and planning support to the department throughout the process. Career planning will be provided in conjunction with this initiative.

Due to imperatives brought about by restructuring, this priority has been deferred. The priority will be pursued in 2001-2002.

- Continue to provide quality, cost effective training and development opportunities and human resources programs customized to meet identified needs within the Department.

HR staff provided Change Intervention workshops, Interview & Resume Writing courses, and full day individual related assistance for all levels of staff across the province to help in workplace adjustment. Supervisory Development was offered regionally in Truro. Customized programs were delivered for Train the Trainer for JOHS and for the Aquaculture section. Facilitation training and First Aid courses were delivered.

- Continue the provision of efficient personnel, payroll and benefit administration services for all employees.

Services in this area were provided and included the additional Transition Support Program.

- Streamline the Disability Case Management process and continue the provision of related consultative and support services leading to improved employee morale and productivity.

HR staff identified issues prior to employees going on leave due to illness or injuries wherever possible; provided guidance in ergonomics and stress related illness/injuries to prevent or correct situations, and worked with physicians and management to develop employee return-to-work programs.

- Provide advice and assistance regarding Occupational Health and Safety Program changes which ensure compliance with related legislation and the provision of a safe and healthy workplace.

HR staff provided advice and recommendations with respect to ongoing legislative changes; led focus groups in the development of new policies and procedures such as Designated Competent Person in accordance with the Occupational Safety General Regulations; participated in a Departmental Advisory Group, and led a needs assessment to identify specific client OH&S training needs.

- Assist Managers in their Occupational Health and Safety Audit preparation by leading audit readiness exercises and follow up in their sections.

HR staff collaborated with clients to conduct inspections to ensure continued compliance.

Information Technology Corporate Service Unit (IT-CSU)

- Providing operational support. The IT Division provides support for business systems, desktops and networks. This includes providing telephone support through the CSU Help Desk, repairing system faults, providing enhancements, monitoring network and server data backups.

IT continued to streamline HelpDesk procedures to improve quality and timeliness of client service; assumed management responsibility for Regional Support at the corporate level and, the Completion of Phase II expanded desktop support to regional offices across the province.

- Providing operational planning for IT systems.

IT supported the physical merger of Agriculture and Fisheries offices in the Bank of Montreal Building. This required the move of workstations and the network server.

IT staff performed regular upgrades to network and desktop software to ensure compatibility, stability, reliability, and desktop and network security, physically split the NSAC (college staff) and the NSDAM (government staff) into two networks, moved NSAC faculty and staff to a new student email system (NIMS), implemented the GroupWise email system for Department of Agriculture in Truro, and completed a review of VAX business applications with the purpose of identifying options for replacement or migration from the VAX platform.

- Prioritization of departmental IT initiatives.

Resources CSU-IT Division staff worked with senior management in the department to ensure prioritization and alignment of IT projects with departmental business plans.

IT staff provided advice and support for the transition of the Dairy Commission to the NS Dairy Producers Association. This involved obtaining an external Internet provider, modifications to the Total Product Quality application, and obtaining ongoing IT support from an external provider.

IT staff provided support for the following business applications/initiatives:
Crop and Livestock Commission System Replacement
Crop Insurance, Underwriting and Accounting System Support

- Enhancing the Fisheries Licensing system resulting from new legislation. A commitment in the Government's Blue Book agenda is also to "Tackle the growing problem of illegal fishing, buying and selling by strengthening the Fisheries Enforcement efforts."

IT staff provided enhancements to the Fisheries Licensing & Aquaculture Tracking Systems to support legislative changes in regulations and fees.

- Providing IT consulting services and resources to implement IT initiatives across the department dependent on resource availability and department priorities.

IT staff provided coordination and support for web development standards, web training, and application development for departmental web site.

- CSU IT resources provide on-going maintenance support and enhancements for Department of Fisheries custom business applications.

IT staff provided support for the following business applications/initiatives:
Fisheries Licensing & Aquaculture Tracking Systems.
A review of required changes to the Fisheries Loan System has been completed and cost estimates are under review for approval to proceed.

- Amalgamation of the Fisheries and Agriculture web site.
- Support for the 26th Annual Fisheries AIC Conference.
- Support for the Aquaculture Association of Canada Conference.
- Performed Preliminary Analysis for the Enforcement Information Management System.
- Statistics Canada data conversion and documentation for the Landings Database.
- Food Safety Needs Assessment.

- Resources to assist the Nova Scotia Farm Loan Board in providing an integrated loans management system which will meet their needs. A commitment in the Government's Blue Book agenda is to "Maintain the Nova Scotia Farm Loan Board as a separate entity."

The acquisition of an 'off-the-shelf' Loans Management system is currently on hold pending completion of an internal review.

- Resources to work with the Agricultural Development Division on a cost-shared basis to upgrade the Farm Registration system. The new system will require new application form and potential refund status changes. These are currently being worked on.

IT staff completed an assessment of the current situation and recommendations have been delivered and approved. Work is ongoing to move the current system into a more up to date technical environment.

Highlights from Financial Services Corporate Service Unit (FS-CSU)

Financial Services priorities for 2000/2001 included the implementation of government wide initiatives, as well as several department projects. Government wide initiatives that are also department priorities include:

- Implementation of Tangible Capital Asset Policy that will modify the manner in which government accounts for tangible capital assets. The accounting portion of this policy will be implemented through the asset management module of SAP.

This is now in effect.

- Development and implementation of a policy for the use of debit and credit cards in government offices that provide goods and services to the public. This initiative will improve the ease with which the public can access and purchase government goods and services.

The Department of Agriculture & Fisheries is now using debit and credit cards.

- Continuing to improve the reporting capability of the provincial Central Financial Management System. Improvements to existing financial reports and the creation of new ones will improve the financial information available to civil servants.

The availability of new SAP print fonts has eliminated time consuming procedures to create monthly forecast turn around reports, and these reports are now generated directly from the CFMS system. Continued to download/export financial information to spreadsheets for "ad hoc" reporting to clients.

- Supporting role in the "Buy Nova Scotia First Program" by ensuring government tendering policies (practised by the Resource Departments) allow Nova Scotian companies to compete fairly for government business.

All policies of the Province of Nova Scotia are followed.

- Strengthening fiscal accountability within the resource departments.

Detailed and Summary Financial Reports are distributed to department management on a timely basis, monthly. Monthly forecasts are then completed and reported to the Department of Finance, as per established forecast reporting time lines.

- Cutting the cost of government by monitoring and reducing nonessential spending.

Current Procurement Policies are followed.

- Ensuring that Resource Departments Financial Quarterly information is complete and provides detailed comparative analysis from one quarter to the next.

By ensuring that financial information is provided to management on a timely basis, all financial information is completed for analysis as required.

Department specific priorities of Financial Services include:

- Continuing to improve the integration of the business planning and budget process.

While the business planning and the budgeting process continue to be separate processes, the Department of Agriculture & Fisheries integrates the two processes by having several joint committee members and monthly updates to senior management.

- Examining the structure of the Finance Section, Resources CSU to ensure that staff provides continuous service improvement for our client departments. This is particularly important with government's move towards new procurement practises such as procurement cards, "Buy Nova Scotia First" program and program/service review.

Financial Services continued to look for new and better ways to improve service to clients.

Budgeted Net Expenditure 2000-1001

Agriculture & Fisheries, 2000-2001
($000)
Branch/Division

Agriculture & Marketing				
Senior Management	1056	894	162	15.3%
Agricultural Development	14,275	15,793	(1,518)	[A]-10.6%
Resource Stewardship	2208	* 2105	103	4.7%
Quality Evaluation	4064	3,736	328	8.1%
Boards and Commissions	6980	6,636	344	4.9%
N.S. Agricultural College	4902	4,922	(20)	-0.4%
	33,485	**34,086**	(601)	-1.8%
Fisheries & Aquaculture				
Administrative Services	446	692	(246)	-55.2%
Fisheries Loan Board	488	459	29	5.9%
Resource Development	1,122	1,011	111	9.9%
Technology and Inspection	1,217	1,086	131	10.8%
Aquaculture	816	797	19	2.3%
Marketing	466	492	(26)	-5.6%
Education and Training	545	558	(13)	-2.4%
Inland Fisheries	616	611	5	0.8%
	5,716	**5,706**	10	0.2%
Agriculture & Fisheries	**39,201**	**39,792**	**(591)**	-1.5%
Resource Stewardship		2,170		
Rural Leadership		(159)		
Production Technology		94		
Total		* 2105		

Notes:
[A] Unforseen expenditure (net) of approximately one million dollars in assistance to Pork Nova Scotia re loan to Business.

Appendix 1
Organizational Chart Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture and Fisheries